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STATE OF THE UNION.

SPEECH

OF THE

HON. CHARLES B. SEDGWICK. OF NEW YORK.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 7, 1861.

The House having under consideration the report from the Select Committee of Thirty-three—

Mr. SEDGWICK said:

Mr. SPEAKER: I approach the discussion of this subject with a profound impression of its importance, and my inability to do it justice. I shall waste none of the time of this House in any preliminary statements in regard to this question. Three months ago the people of this country were engaged in the discharge of a most important political duty—the election of their Chief Magistrate. The country was in a condition of profound peace. Three months have passed, and what now is our condition? We find six States in actual rebellion against the Federal Government; we find that no property of the United States within their borders is sacred; that they have seized upon our forts and arsenals; that they have robbed the Treasury; that they have seized public vessels; and that we are menaced by the actual levy and support of standing armies. Even this Capitol, in which our deliberations are held, is threatened. Seven other States, with more or less of apparent sincerity, are threatening that the firing of a gun in support of the laws of the Union, shall be the signal of general hostilities against the Government. No State seems to know that it is the imperative duty of this Government and of its executive officers to protect and preserve the property which has thus been ruthlessly seized. We see the men upon whom we are to rely for our defense and the protection of our property, the officers of our Army and Navy, forgetful of the allegiance which they owe to the country, and of the solemn obligations of their oaths, abandoning their trusts, and accepting office under separate and hostile States, as if that were the merest discharge of high duty. So low has this Government fallen, that the little State of Florida, with less population than the Congressional district I represent, and far below it in all that constitutes strength and greatness, is flaunting her banner in the face of the United States; and we are gravely told that a truce upon her shores has been declared between the Government of the United States and the hostile armies assembled there.

But I shall not dwell upon this. I wish to point to one other noteworthy event: that for the first time in the history of this country it has become necessary that the Federal capital now should bristle with bayonets in order to secure the peaceful inauguration of a President chosen at a constitutional and lawful election of the people. I trust, sir, that that inauguration will take place; that it will take place peacefully; that, at all events, it shall happen at the time and place appointed by the Constitution and the laws. I trust, with that event, other characteristics of the Executive will be inaugurated. I mean vigor, I mean courage, I mean moderation, which, while it demands nothing but what is clearly right—submission to the laws—will be satisfied with nothing less, and will submit to nothing that is clearly wrong. I trust there will be brought into the executive mansion, with that moderation and manly courage, the *persistency* which al-

ways secures its ends. I trust that the man who assumes the robes of office will feel that—

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"The only real element of luck
Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck."

If a little of these desirable qualities had existed in the executive mansion three months ago, if the President had had energy, foresight, and courage enough to send reinforcements to a single fortress in our waters, this difficulty would not now be upon us. The golden opportunity has been lost, and we are now driven by slow steps, by painful processes, to regain what that inconsiderateness or cowardice has lost us.

Mr. Speaker, I am not one of those who believe that all these dire events have sprung from trivial causes. I do not subscribe to the philosophy which teaches that events are ever disproportionate to the causes that produce them. Let us inquire what is the evil which we are called to consider, and for which we are to provide a remedy. In the first place, there is no pretense whatever that there is any tyrannous or oppressive or unequal legislation by Congress which is threatening the destruction of any of these States, or any of their prominent interests. That would be tangible. That was the case which occurred in 1832, when the complaint was of the operation of a specific law, which law could be reached and modified by the action of the Federal Legislature. There is no pretense that there is any clause of the Constitution under which the rights or interests of these seceding States have been or can be assailed. Nobody claims this. I believe, sir, upon the subject of slavery, I am about as radical as most people who have the honor of a seat here, and yet I never heard the man who pretended that, under the Constitution of this country, the Federal Government could assail or touch, by legislation, the rights of slaveholding States, or the security of their interests, in any single particular. But we are told that there are personal liberty bills, which are a standing menace to the South. I venture to say, that on the assemblage of Congress at this session, there were not ten men here who could put their finger upon the law of a single State which they could say was a violation of the Constitution.

Why, sir, I know something about the law of the State of New York. It was passed ten years before this fugitive slave law was passed. It was passed because, as all of us who are acquainted with the history of that State know, it was necessary for the protection of the citizens of that State. There are those who hear me, who know that an actual instance occurred where a free man was twelve years under the lash and scourge of the slave-driver—a man as much entitled to his liberty as any man in my State; and that these laws were passed for the purpose of protecting our own citizens; and so far as they refuse to allow our officers to be engaged in any attempt whatever to arrest fugitive slaves, they go upon the ground, and follow the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of *Prigg vs. Pennsylvania*.

I will now show that this law of New York does not interfere with the execution of the fugitive slave law. In the county in which I reside a deputy marshal of the United States was indicted under it, and brought to trial before a Republican judge for executing the process of the United States, issued under the law of 1850, for the recovery of fugitive slaves. On the trial he put in evidence the marshal's warrant, issued by the commissioner under that law. The whole subject was discussed in that court. He was prosecuted with zeal and energy; but the Republican judge held that the marshal's warrant under the fugitive slave law was full and ample protection and defense against any prosecution under the State laws.

And so the fact was established by the decision of that court, that whenever the law of a State interferes with a constitutional law of Congress, upon any subject, however odious, it would not be sustained, but be pronounced unconstitutional and void. There is, then, no real difficulty in this matter. And permit me here to say, that the fugitive slave law requires no amendment at our hands. Nobody has asked it. Sir, I believe I have as low an appreciation of that law as a human being can have with limited faculties; and yet I am willing to let it stand, as fit monument of the madness of the times in which it was passed. And when the future historian shall come back to our day to find the evidence of that barbarism from which to date the progress of laws for his time, he need go no further back than the fugitive slave law of 1850.

But the real difficulty in regard to all this matter is, that there is no loyalty anywhere to the fugitive slave law, I care not where it is. The South must be satisfied with a condition which, from the nature of things and of man, cannot be changed. In the first place, there is a physical necessity of having a free State border. In the next place there is a natural disposition upon the part of slaves to run; and although conscience stands at one elbow, and tells them not to run from kind, benevolent, patriarchal masters, yet the Fiend stands at the other elbow, and tells them, in the persuasive language used to honest Launcelot Gobbo, the servant of an olden Jew, "Budge;" and the advice of the Fiend, in this irreverent age, will always prevail, notwithstanding the beneficent and Christian character of the institution from which he is advised to escape.

But there is another difficulty about this. There is a trouble which cannot be overcome in human nature. It is the instinctive desire of every human being who sees another fleeing from oppression to help him along in his course. I care not who is the man—it may be the chairman of the committee—who desires a more efficient fugitive slave law; it may be leaders of the Democratic conventions of northern States, who say the South shall have their constitutional rights, and who, just before an election, will preach very fairly upon the subject of the fugitive slave law, but who, if a captive comes to their hearth at night, or early morning, will forget the obligations of party, forget the binding obligations of the Constitution of the United States, and, without inquiring too particularly into his history, tell the panting fugitive that nearer the north star is the safer place for a man of his color, and will help him with food, money, and scrip for his journey.

Again, Mr. Speaker, there is the territorial question. I am not disposed to argue that at any length. The admission of New Mexico, as a slave State now, would not settle the territorial question. Nothing short of incorporating the Breckinridge platform and the Dred Scott decision into the Constitution will satisfy the southern people. Why? Because New Mexico is a barren gift. It is not desired; it is not desirable. It is a craving for something beyond: the desire to establish the principle, which, I believe, very few men of sense in this House will consent to—that all after acquisitions of territory shall follow the constitutional right which they seek to establish for the present Territories.

Now, sir, it is evident to my mind that all this convulsion and revolution has not grown out of the complaints here presented, and for which the committee of thirty-three have recommended remedies. These remedies, therefore, however sufficient and proper for the specific complaints, will leave the real difficulty wholly unadjusted; and I am therefore opposed to them all. Some of them I might give my assent to—some of the declaratory resolutions of the committee. They are very proper as a declaration of sentiment in a private caucus or in a town meeting; but they answer no appropriate end here. They may be repealed to-morrow. They give no security against what may happen hereafter. They are desired by nobody; asked for by nobody; and will have no practical result. I therefore feel constrained to vote against every measure of compromise which has been offered.

Again: I think the day for compromises is past. They have proved hitherto mere delusions, sustained only so long as they did not stand in the way of any favorite policy of a majority. Take the most solemn of them all—the Missouri compromise of 1820: it stood while nobody was interested in procuring its repeal; it stood until party interest demanded that it should be broken down; and then, without regard to the sanctity of the compact—an old compact, under which benefits had been derived upon one side—it was remorselessly stricken down. That act shocked the moral sense of the people. I said then, as I say now, that it removed the existing barrier between any feelings which we entertained in regard to the right of Territories south of that line to come into the Union as slave States. It opened the whole territorial question upon its merits. It enabled us to say, if slavery was good south of that line, it was good north of that line; and it enabled us also to say if it was a political, a moral, and a social evil north of an imaginary degree of latitude, it was equally a political, moral, and social evil south of that line.

I say again, that not a single Representative of any southern State is able to give any assurance whatever that the adoption of any of the measures recommended by the committee's report would either induce one rebel State to return to its allegiance or secure the loyalty of a single one which yet remains true to the Government. Who is to say that when we have debased ourselves by yielding to these compromises with slavery, that a single State upon the other side is to be bound by our action, or even influenced in any decisive degree, by what we shall do here? Sir, it is a dangerous principle to amend or abolish laws under excitement, or from impulse, or from fear, and much more is it dangerous to alter our organic law—the Constitution. The proposed amendment of the Constitution is to pacify a mere imaginary fear for the future, and lull apprehensions of events which will never take place. It is not necessary, for no one claims the power which this amendment denies.

But if I am mistaken in all this; if it is impossible to say what may be the future complication of events, and how it may affect us; if it is impossible to see that what looks like good now may not prove hurtful to-morrow; if it should turn out in the future that some two or three of these States should desire emancipation, and should desire to be aided in their efforts by the General Government; you perceive that this amendment ties their hands, stifles their voices, and prevents us from affording them the aid which they may unanimously desire, until the remotest State upon the Gulf is satisfied to allow them to inaugurate and carry out a system of emancipation.

For these reasons, I am opposed to any alteration of the Constitution. If this amendment to the Constitution does give an additional guarantee to the institution of slavery; if it does make the task of emancipating the slaves in any State harder and more difficult; if it protracts their bondage for one single day in any State of this Confederacy; then I am opposed to it upon principle; and I would rather my right arm should drop from its socket than to admit the principle that by constitutional amendment, or by legislative enactment, you can add one single hour of slavery to any human being or on any spot of the earth which God's sun visits.

Again, sir: as to the New Mexican project, I say that it necessarily cheats one side or the other. I must use good, bold English in regard to this matter, or I shall not talk about it as I understand it. It is offered, if the committee mean anything, as a compromise, as a concession; and although men may stand up in their places and say that they think New Mexico will be a free State, that they think it will not come into the Union as a slave State, yet nobody can deny the fact that it is *offered to the South as a concession*—a yielding to them of the Territories of New Mexico and Arizona. The people of the slave States will so understand it. If they can be deceived in regard to the purposes of the Republican party, spread out as they are in the sun, so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err in regard to them; if they can be made to believe that we are to assail their institutions by Federal legislation; that we are to attack them within the boundaries of the States—I ask if they are not compelled to believe, when you offer this to them as a measure of peace, that they are to have it as a slave State, for their property to go to, for them to establish their institutions in; and yet you will go home to the North and say that, although we have yielded what they demanded on the subject of slavery in the Territories by allowing them to bring in a State already marked for slavery by an inhuman code, such as few other States can show; although we have done this, although we have consented that a State may come into the Confederacy without sufficient population, without the means of carrying on a State government at all, yet we did it for the purpose of deceiving the South, and letting them imagine that a tub was thrown to the whale, when, after all, we meant it as a gilded and barbed hook. I do not believe in such legislation as this. I do not believe it is honest. I do not believe it is fair. I do not believe you can justify yourselves in the face of an honest constituency for offering a measure of this kind as a measure of peace. Why, you know that whenever this State comes here with a free constitution, and is admitted as a State, you will be reproached for your perfidy: and you cannot stand up in the face of outraged southern constituencies and say, we did not intend to deceive you in this matter. It is impossible that any honest man should do it.

Again: I am opposed to this measure, because I do not desire to see a competition for New Mexico between the free and the slave powers of this Confederacy. I do not desire to see again repeated upon this continent the fraud and force and corruption of Kansas; the strife of emigration—armed, contentions, vindictive, and sectional. But it is said that it is only a small sacrifice—only two hundred and forty thousand square miles which this barbarous code of New Mexico covers—which enables a man only over that small area to scourge and stripe labor, and wring from it unrequited toil; and it is very poor land at that. Why, sir, I care not if, instead of twenty-four, there was but a single slave upon that soil, I never would consent to the admission of that State until those barbarous laws were repealed. I never would consent to it under any supposed obligation under the organic act of 1850, or any compact anywhere. I say that New Mexico should come before this Congress, or whatever Congress she approaches, for admission as other States come; and when she comes, she shall be tried upon her merits. If she is found wanting in any of the particulars which were so pertinaciously required of Kansas, she shall not have admission to this Union by my vote or my influence. And yet, we are entreated to yield this small Territory to slavery, and to settle this question upon that basis. Commerce approaches us, and takes us upon a very high bill, and shows us these broad and splendid fields of cotton, with their rivulets of silver, and the golden sunsets beyond, and asks us if we cannot give even this boon to satisfy the South. Commerce would say, "Cheat the South, if you will; but get the bill passed, and the Union saved, and then start your emigration societies, and your means for making it what you avow it is your design to make it here on this floor—a free State."

But I must pass from this topic. I am opposed to compromise, because I believe the complaints, as stated by the members of this committee to have been brought before them, are utterly groundless, and the proposed remedies puerile. It does not touch the matter in controversy. And here my learned friend from Massachusetts [Mr. Adams] will pardon me for saying that I have read with great interest his historical parallel to show that a strong and proud nation should not despise even trivial and groundless complaints. I do not so read the history of the Revolution of our fathers. I do not

understand that they went to war upon trivial and groundless complaints. I do not understand that that great contest was a mere contest about a three-cent duty on tea, or a stamp upon paper, or a duty imposed upon window glass; but I do understand it to have been a contest for a great principle, going to the very foundation of organized civil society. I understand that the Parliament of Great Britain asserted the right, in all cases whatsoever, to tax, or, in other words, to legislate for the colonies, and this without any representation upon their part; and that they, imbued with the true principles of English liberty—the principle which established the right of revolution at home, which led them abroad to Holland, and again across the trackless waste of waters to this country—contended for the ever living principle of freedom, that taxation should be accompanied in all cases by representation; that they contended for that principle, and that submission to laws among freemen implied a voice in their enactment. There is no lesson in history which teaches that compromise or concession to the groundless demands or complaints of equal States, not only fully represented, but with more than an equal representation, based not only on persons, but upon their property, and who have exercised throughout all our history to the present time a controlling influence upon our legislation, and upon the foreign and domestic policy of the Government, are to be dignified by a comparison with the complaints of an oppressed people who were denied all representation by those who sought to govern them.

But we are told that the great Lord Chancellor of England,

"The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind."

advised yielding something to discontentments. Now, I think, with all due deference to superior learning, that he never advised yielding to insolent demands from a discontented people, nor yet to change the British constitution and laws, to remove discontentments founded on no possible rightful complaints. I hardly think that, at this day, you will find a British statesman, of approved sense and wisdom, who would advise concession, a change in the time-honored constitution, and a reconstruction in their laws, because the clans of Scotland, asserting their ancient independence, should again rally on their mountains, and come down with arms, to demand guarantees for rights which nobody threatened, relief from laws by which nobody was oppressed, and security against events which it was perfectly impossible should ever happen.

But, sir, I am profoundly impressed with the wisdom of the saying, that "the surest way to prevent sedition, (if the times do bear it,) is to take away the matter of it; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire." Tell me whence comes the spark which has set this country in a blaze? What is the "matter of sedition" in our day that should be removed "if the times do bear it?" What is there, beyond these trivial and groundless complaints, beyond these discontents that appear on the surface? What is there in this country, which is always a magazine, not only of prepared fuel, but of the dryest powder, which a single spark might explode, to the destruction of this whole Confederacy? What is it that, in the whole course of our history, has alone threatened the liberty, the Union, the prosperity of this country? What is it that in 1811—nay, before that—and in 1820, in 1832, in 1850, in 1860, has been perpetually threatening the liberties of this country? Does anybody wait for an answer? Does anybody desire to know to what I point? It is the institution of slavery, inwrought into the very framework of our Government, covering with a black pall nearly one-half of this Confederacy, jealous of its rights, inflammable, unreasonable, easily excited, with cause or without.

No, sir, we need fear no foreign war. We need fear no aggression from without. The armies of the world may invade us. Our fortifications may be in the hands of the traitors who have now wrenched them from the Federal Government; they may be sunk in the sea, with our ships; and yet, so long as the red school-house stands on our hills, we are invincible, unconquerable by any foreign force, or any foreign element of power that may be brought against us. But what is it that is eating into our vitals? What is it that is corrupting the very life-blood of the Confederacy? Need I answer again, it is that accursed institution of slavery, which in all time has been, and in all time to come will be, a perpetual weakness, a disgrace, a calamity.

Now, sir, this is the disease with which we have to deal. It is not a case for the *placebos* of the committee of thirty-three, nor yet for the small pills of Hahnemann, nor for the bleeding and warm water of Dr. Sangrado. It is a case for surgery. I am not now to speak of slavery as I look on it, as an institution of barbarism. I am not to speak of it as my people regard it; not to speak of it as all historians describe it, as all poets sing of it, as all moralists and philosophers teach about it, as all philanthropists look upon it; I merely wish to speak of it as a political power in this Confederacy. It is a great power. Whenever any of its real or supposed interests are affected, it rallies around it the Representatives and Senators of fifteen States as one man. It scents dan-

ger in the tainted breeze. It is unwearied in its vigilance, unrelenting in its purpose. It has controlled the politics of this country for sixty years and more; and now, when its political encroachments and unreasonable demands have rallied the North against it, and when the census, with unerring finger, points to the end of its political power and influence, it breaks out into rebellion and violence; it would usurp the Government by force, and override the expressed will of the people by terror and bloodshed. In several of the States it is a settled policy to make this institution perpetual.

There is no diligent student of the history of the time but knows that when the Constitution was formed it was the intention of its framers that that institution should, in a reasonable time, be abolished by the voluntary action of the people of the States. Six States performed their duty in regard to it by adopting schemes of gradual emancipation. And now, because it is profitable, because it is a source of political power, because it is a thing to which politicians may address their appeals in an inflamed and excited community, a change has come over the intention and spirit of the country, and this institution is to be made perpetual. It insists not only on tolerance, not only that we shall leave it within the limits of the States untouched, but it insists on universal assent to its rightfulness, and on constitutional recognition and protection. Grant this, and who does not know that its next step will be to demand the reopening of the slave trade? And rightfully, because, if it is just in itself; if you have a moral and political right to hold slaves, you have a right to a supply of that labor from any source open to your reach; and the slave trade will be, as it has already been, justified on the rostrum and in the pulpit. It will be demanded as a just tribute to the progress of Christianity and the enlightened influence of the age, that laws—barbarous, obsolete, criminal laws—declaring this just commerce piracy, shall be repealed, and the slave traders shall again sit among the merchant princes as the honorable of the earth, and the blessing of Heaven will be pronounced each returning Sabbath on the sails of the pirate as on the sails of all others who go down to the sea in ships.

Nay, a little further. As free opinions and their exponents, free speech and free press, are inconsistent with it, as it suppresses them at home by the cord or by fire, so it demands, through the committee of thirty-three, their suppression as being "with intent to subvert the institutions of another State." Very careful and slow in its approaches, and now for the first time receiving legislative countenance, freedom of the press is to be put down.

But I must pass along. The institution, as I have described it, has twenty Representatives on this floor, of its property—or should have if they had not basely fled from their trust and abandoned their seats here, to establish treason against the Government in their several States. It should have twenty Representatives upon this floor of its property; and this inequality it will necessarily carry into any territory it may acquire and bring in as a slave State. You cannot admit New Mexico as a State without admitting her with this inequality. It has but six of the thirteen original States; all of the rest have, as I have said, in accordance with the sentiment existing at the formation of the Government, and the implied understanding upon which the Constitution was agreed to, emancipated their slaves. Yet it has increased its numbers to fifteen; and it now demands the protection of the Government in the vast Territories, the forcible seizure and subjugation of which is now contemplated.

If an adjustment is effected upon the basis of this committee's report, it will not stand a year against the threatened piracy, plunder, privateering, the renewal of the slave trade, and the seizure of adjacent States, which is contemplated.

The policy and aims of slavery, its institutions and civilization, and the character of its people, are all at variance with the policy, aims, institutions, education, and character of the North. There is an irreconcilable difference in our interests, institutions, and pursuits; in our sentiments and feelings. No truth is more apparent than this: "that this Government cannot permanently remain half slave and half free." The idea of a temporary separation, and a permanent reconstruction, is visionary and foolish. Whenever the slave States of this Confederacy shall be acknowledged by this Government to be rightfully separated from their allegiance, that separation will be final and permanent. The North stands ready, while they are in the Union, to perform its constitutional obligations; but let them once be acknowledged to be free from those constitutional obligations, to be separated from their relations as States within a common Confederacy, and you cannot find a school district within the North that will ever consent to a reconstruction of this Government upon any such basis of the representation of property as is now permitted in this House upon the part of the slaveholding States. Nay, you cannot find any district which would consent to admit such a State at all, unless with a full provision for the speedy emancipation of its slaves. If gentlemen choose to try the experiment upon that basis, the quicker they go about it the better it will suit the Representatives of a great proportion of the inhabitants of the North.

But, sir, I must hasten to a close. I am satisfied that the experiment of a perpetual Union between free and slave States, under a republican Government, is a failure. You may tinker it, you may patch it, you may doctor it, you may turn it over to a council of politicians, or a council of physicians, it will come back to the same position: that there is an irrevocable, irreconcilable difference between free and slave institutions; and if States that maintain both systems remain under the same Government, one or the other must yield.

Now, how do I propose to settle this matter? Because, I go not for concession or compromise. I go for a *settlement* that shall be final; that shall leave each to pursue its own policy, without the interference or clashing of hostile interests. In the first place, I shall insist that, as a preliminary step, if it shall take generations to accomplish it, that the Constitution and laws must be restored to their integrity, and the rebel States to obedience. We will put our laws upon a footing where they shall be executed. We will have the property that has been wrenched from us by rebellion and robbery. We will have the forts; we will have the arsenals; we will have the hospitals; we will have the mints, and the vessels, which treachery has betrayed to our enemies. We will have everything that belongs to us, and the old *status* fully restored; and then we will have a settlement of this controversy. How? I would consent that all the slave States, with contiguous territory which desire to make slavery perpetual, should go into a separate Confederacy, peaceably and quietly, with the full consent of all parties in the Government; they should assume their just share of the public liabilities; they should have such public property as lies within their limits, not required by the necessities of our condition. If any of the slave States choose to remain, I would provide that the Federal Government should make full and fair compensation for their slaves, with the condition of gradual emancipation, and their colonization, if need be. If no slave State chose to remain, I would then amend the Constitution so that no slave State should ever be admitted into the Union. I would then provide for the freedom of all the avenues of commerce, and especially for the free and unobstructed navigation of the Mississippi river. The right of search should not be driven from the ocean to be re-established upon the banks of the Mississippi: I would retain such fortresses and places of defense on the Gulf as would be necessary to secure our commerce against any threatened piracy or privateering by any power on earth. These two civilizations might then start peaceably on their several careers of generous rivalry. And permit me to say that, if the Union is destroyed, the world will soon comprehend the difference "between a compact nation of educated, free, and self-dependent citizens and a community of indolent and insolent proprietors of land, living in hourly dread of a herd of slaves."

I need not stop to speak of the glory of the northern empire, with its capital upon the great lakes, with a ship canal from the Mississippi to the ocean, with improved rivers, harbors and roads, with all the vast territories about her, ready to rush into close alliance with a nation which has shown that it dared to be just, and has freed itself from an institution which alone has excluded it from national sympathy. And I need not point to the other experiment. If the success of the cotton dynasty fulfills the expectations of the prophets and seers who have talked to us about it, it will be the first nation on the face of God's earth that has ever been established with its foundations broad and deep in inhumanity and injustice, which has prospered, and whose disgraceful and ignominious history has not been written from its commencement to its close. But the Representatives of the seceded States talk about withholding their cotton until they bring France and England on their knees as suppliants, praying for an alliance with them. Sir, the failure of an American supply of cotton is a contingency which has been long looked forward to in England, and carefully guarded against. Lord John Russell, in a letter to the Manchester Cotton Supply Association, has pointed to this precise event, and the remedies proposed. In view of that fact, China has recently been opened by British and French arms and negotiation. India also produces abundant cotton. Australia, with a much longer season, produces as good an article as you can grow on your sea islands. In Africa and Central America cotton is an indigenous plant. It grows without labor; and they are capable of affording an inexhaustible supply of the article.

In the North we shall try to get along with such a substitute as nature affords us. Flax of short fibre, mixed with forty per cent. of cotton, can now be furnished to the cotton looms of New England at eight cents per pound; and flax of long fibre, when invention born of necessity has succeeded in perfecting—as she soon will do—a few little machines already in the Patent Office, can be furnished to the linen-spinner at a much less price per pound. And this article (flax) grows on every variety of soil, and in every climate, from Maine to Minnesota. The manufacturing world long ago determined not much longer to be subject to the caprices of a slaveholding oligarchy which they hated and despised, but whose cotton they had then found no substitute for. And if I could

procure no other sufficient substitute, rather than submit to this tyrannous dictation of king cotton, I would go back to the costume of our first parents in the garden of Eden before the fall.

An honorable gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. GARNETT,] to show us how slavery strengthened and ennobled a people, has referred us to historical examples. He says: that slavery prevailed in the mightiest and most cultivated empires of the Old World and was the source of their strength. I know that slavery existed both in Athens and Rome. And the same history has taught us that the Athenians soon lost the hardy virtues of their early life, and became cruel, unjust, effeminate, and corrupt; that they drove Pericles into exile for his justice, and poisoned Socrates for his wisdom and virtue, and became soon the prey of the spoiler, and the petty province of a stronger and more barbarous despotism.

If I have read history aright, it was not the luxurious and effeminate Roman of the later and slaveholding empire who bore the unconquered eagles over the burning sands of Lybia and the frozen regions of the North, but the hardy, industrious, virtuous Roman of "the brave days of old;" and the slaveholder has read Roman history to little profit who has forgotten that a Thracian gladiator, at the head of sixty thousand slaves slaughtered the mightiest armies of Rome, driving back Consul after Consul in defeat and disgrace, and threatened with his victorious arms the very gates of the seven-hilled city herself; that the cities of Italy were plundered and burned, and her broad fields left a sea of blackened desolation; that, looking abroad from her hills, such a scene of smoking ruins was beheld as the world will never see again until the hordes of Africa are driven, by intolerable cruelty, to take arms against their oppressors. Nor can gentlemen forget, who have studied the downfall of that Roman empire, that slavery and luxury, having corrupted and destroyed and eaten out the vitals of the empire, plunged her into the darkness of the middle ages; and it is left for our day, while the blessings of slavery are being commended to us in the Congress of the United States, to witness the great apostle of modern liberty and equality (Garibaldi) re-establishing the unity of Italy, and reviving, with their divine spirit, the desolate fields of Rome.

Sir, the sentiment of union is strong in this country; but the sentiment of liberty thank God, is stronger. We desire union; but *we will have liberty*; and we are determined, come union or disunion, to retain and re-emblazon the old emblems; bring back the old courage; revive the old virtues of public faith, honesty, and integrity. We will preserve what we can of our glorious inheritance; and if we must look upon a dismembered and broken Confederacy, still

—"we will press
The golden cluster of our brave old flag
In closer union; and, if numbering less,
Brighter shall shine the stars which still remain."

W. H. MOORE, Printer, Penn. Avenue, corner of 11th street.





